

(677) 111
Boston, March 19, 1877

Dear Mrs. Chapman:

Concerning the matter referred to your letter of the 15th instant, — namely, the relation of the Free Trade movement in England to our own Anti-Slavery conflict, — I can recall no word of cheer from that quarter, even incidentally expressed, whether through the columns of its recognized organ, the London Daily News, or from the lips of its distinguished leaders, Messrs Cobden and Bright. If that seeming lack of sympathy, in regard to our principles and object, had been simply owing to an absorbing interest in the repeal of the Corn Laws, — a powerful monopoly having to be met and conquered, and therefore requiring a special consecration of time, means and efforts until the victory should be won, — I do not think the American abolitionists would have seen or felt much cause for surprise or complaint. But it was too palpably the consequence of an open and cordial affiliation with our Southern slave oligarchy, headed by Calhoun and Mc Duffie, who were hailed as on the side of reform and progress because of their hollow clamor for free trade as against a protective tariff, and therefore not to be alienated by any indication of abhorrence of their system of chattel slavery, or any approval of the struggle then going on for its overthrow. As if those who were shamelessly trading "in slaves and souls of men" — holding with an iron grasp and a desperate will a monopoly in human flesh to the extent of two thousand millions of dollars — could be sincerely opposed to the grinding of the faces of the poor in Great Britain, because it was short-sighted political economy to deprive the masses of "free bread!"

Mem. by F. J. G., Dec. 2, 1867. Mrs. Rebecca Moore ^{of England} says that busts of
Calhoun & another Southern statesman (?) were placed in the
Free Trade Rooms at Manchester, and that John Bright "was a
regular Philistine" in regard to the slavery question. She
fully endorses W. R. G.'s statements.

He knew, and the anti-corn law leaders might have known, that it was morally impossible for such remorseless oppressors to be anchored to any principle (except ostensibly and for a selfish purpose), the adoption of which would help to subvert injustice and misgovernment. Who but they, in the first instance, imposed a protective tariff upon the North, in order to cripple its commercial prosperity; and who, on finding that the North, most unwillingly forced to turn its capital thus profitably employed by an unrestricted commercial policy into new channels, still continued to prosper, maliciously sought the repeal of the tariff as champion free traders? Who but they audaciously maintained that the laboring classes should be owned and governed by their aristocratic despisers, and derisively stigmatised as "mud-sills" the working people of the North? Free traders, forsooth!

Mr Cobden twice visited the United States: I think in 1837, and again in 1857. On neither visit, to my knowledge, did he seek the acquaintance of the abolitionists, or attend any of their numerous gatherings, or give any expression of his views on the slavery question.

In justice to Miss Martineau, you were right in quoting her language, in the "Memorials," as to the "pro-slavery tendencies" of the Free trade party at the period to which she referred as a matter of historical accuracy; nor should they have been omitted in the English edition, as they appear to have been without your approval or knowledge.

I will carefully preserve the various notices of the "Autobiography" that may happen to fall under my observation.

Your attached friend, Wm Lloyd Garrison.

P.S. I hope you received a letter from me, acknowledging with thanks the receipt of your two volumes.

To Mrs Chapman
Mar. 19-1877.